



# Exposing the True Costs of War and Militarism Since 1985

# VETERANS FOR PEACE

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SUMMER 2016

## MEET VFP'S INTERNATIONAL CHAPTERS: IRELAND, OKINAWA, U.K, MEXICO

### IRELAND - ED HORGAN

*What issues are important to your work in Ireland?*

Ireland north and south is a small country with a total population of less than six million (1.5m in Northern Ireland which is part of the UK, and 4.5m in the Republic of Ireland). Peace within Ireland and peace internationally are important issues to all Irish people. While most of the members of Veterans For Peace Ireland live in the Republic of Ireland we also have some members who live in Northern Ireland, and these members also have joint membership of Veterans For Peace UK. Irish neutrality is probably the most important issue for VFP Ireland, because as a small state, we cannot ever be a military power, but we can achieve and have achieved quite a lot as a positive neutral state promoting international peace and sustainable justice and development. Since 2001, successive Irish Governments have been allowing U.S. military and CIA aircraft to transit through Shannon airport in the West of Ireland on their way to and from unjustified wars in the Middle East, and in clear breach of international laws on neutrality.



VFP-Ireland defending Irish neutrality.

2016 is also the centenary of the 1916 revolution that led to Irish independence and sovereignty, so this is a sensitive year in Ireland. While many justify and celebrate the violence that led to our sovereign independence, they probably do not fully recognize that perhaps a better future could have been achieved peacefully, and also that we have once again surrendered an important part of Irish sovereignty to U.S. and NATO militaristic neo-imperialism.

*How did you find out about VFP? What attracted you to us?*

We found out about VFP from Ben Griffin of VFP UK, and his support, combined with very good support from several members of VFP in the USA, has been very valuable in the founding of VFP Ireland Chapter. The key element in us seeking to be associated with VFP USA was

the need to achieve international cooperation towards achieving international peace.

*What are your main actions and strategies?*

So far we are still a small group of just over a dozen members, but we are also closely aligned with other peace promoting NGOs including the Irish Peace and Neutrality Alliance (pana.ie) and Shannonwatch (shannonwatch.org). Many of our

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# FROM THE PRESIDENT

Barry Ladendorf

On May 23, 2016, Michael McPhearson and I had the honor of representing Veterans For Peace at **Breaking Through Power**, an event organized by Ralph Nader, a strong supporter of VFP and a member of our Advisory Board. The event was held at Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C. Michael introduced Veterans For Peace to those in attendance and to the audience watching via live streaming.

May 25<sup>th</sup> -- **Breaking Through the Power of War** day -- was "dedicated to enhancing the waging of peace over the waging of war." To spotlight VFP's continuous efforts on this issue, Ralph Nader asked Michael and I to serve as masters of ceremony. Later, Michael spoke about "Is Peace Possible?" I was honored to represent VFP in my talk on "Holding Government Accountable For Our Endless Wars." I want to share with you some of my remarks. I hope they inspire you to continue the work of VFP and to reach out to others to do the same.

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In breaking through the power of war and in our struggle for a more peaceful world without war we need to understand what we are up against. In her book "They Were Soldiers: How the Wounded Return From America's Wars," Ann Jones (VFP Advisory Board member & upcoming 2016 VFP Convention Banquet Speaker) writes: "**No other nation on the planet makes war as often, as long, as forcefully, as expensively, as destructively, as wastefully, as senselessly, or as unsuccessfully as the United States. No other nation makes war its business.**"

Ann could have added that in its initiation and continuation of its endless wars, the United States regularly ignores the Constitution and our

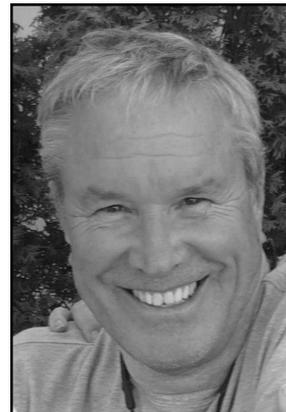
treaty obligations which are the "Supreme Law of the Land" by virtue of Article VI of the Constitution. Is there another nation that makes war its business? I suggest the answer is 'no'. No other nation is in the business of waging war other than the United States and the various willing or unwilling coalition of nations it manages to threaten, cajole and pull together in its endless pursuit to find another nation to invade, bomb or occupy.

When our nation's business is war how do we in VFP hold the government accountable?

For 31 years, Veterans For Peace has been the only veterans organization that has rejected war, violence, nuclear weapons, the destruction of the environment created by war, the steady erosion of our civil liberties, the corporate greed that drives our wars and the systemic injustice it produces here at home and abroad all in the name of advancing the American Empire.

As veterans, we refuse to accept the notion that to protect the United States against all enemies foreign and domestic, the Constitution we swore to support and defend can be ignored, shredded and cast aside as an inconvenient nuisance standing in way of American hegemony. The threat to the Constitution does not come from some far off land like Russia or China, or even some group like ISIL, but from within our own country and from right here in this city, Washington, D.C.

Like Army Captain Nathan Smith, who recently sued President Obama for violating the War Powers Act, we want to know what is the legal authority for using drones that kill innocent civilians in Yemen, Somalia, Libya, Pakistan, Syria and Afghanistan, countries with whom we are not at war?



Ending war will not happen by the action of VFP alone or even by members of the peace movement acting together. We will hold the government accountable and have a chance to end war and the pursuit of nuclear weapons if, and only if, we can wake up the public to what is happening. We must convince them that peace is possible and that their survival and that of their children depends on their waking up.

We garner the public's attention: by direct action in places like Creech, Hancock, and Gangjeong Village; by blocking the gates to military bases in Okinawa; by protesting the militarization of public schools in Chicago; and by our continued support of SOAW and so much more. We talk to schools and civic groups, challenge recruiters, publish the best activist newspaper in the country, **Peace in Our Times**, sail the historic **Golden Rule** to challenge nuclear weapons, and directly confront the rising

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# FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Before news of the horrific mass shooting in Orlando FL, I planned to write about two things. First I want to highlight Veterans For Peace activities on May 23-30 in Washington DC. VFP members lobbied Congress, educating them about deported veterans, the continuing impact of Agent Orange and the Smarter Approach to Nuclear Expenditures (SANE) Act which will cut \$100 billion over the next decade from the bloated nuclear weapons budget. We also challenged them to speak out against Islamophobia. VFP members in communities across the country likewise visited their congressional delegation in their home offices. That same week we participated in Advisory Board member Ralph Nader's Breaking Through Power event, commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the release of *Unsafe at Any Speed* and challenging the control the rich and powerful are exerting in our nation today. Members also participated in a Memorial Day observance near the Lincoln Memorial. Peace was present as VFP supported the Swords to Plowshares Bell Tower monument prominently visible near the Lincoln Memorial. We laid letters at the Vietnam Veterans Wall and we solemnly carried a banner around the reflecting pool calling on people to remember the 3 million Southeast Asians killed in the Vietnam War. It was a good and productive week in the nation's capital for Veterans For Peace.

I feel it is important to briefly address the political races, the acrimony between the Clinton and Sanders campaigns and our work for peace. Elections are important, but what happens in between elections is more important. Or another way to put it; who is elected is important, but there must be a movement to push for real change. We know that after Barak Obama was elected a lot of people demobilized and gave him what some call a honeymoon period

or a chance to do the right thing without being pushed. In part, because of the lack of immediate agitation and a recalcitrant Congress, what we wanted to see happen did not happen. So we must remember and we must tell people that no matter who wins, we can't give them a kind of honeymoon or chance to do what is right. If it's Trump, Hillary or Bernie; it doesn't matter. It's going to take a movement to make the real changes we want take place. And we need each other to build the movement. So while it is good and healthy to struggle with each other about for whom to vote, do not fight to the point you destroy the relationships you will need to build the movement we all need for change. Do not play into the hands of our opposition. Dividing ourselves is exactly what they want.

For years now we all have talked about war at home and war abroad. The killing of 50 people in Orlando is an example of what is meant by a war at home. The mass shooting is also an example of troops facing harm's way abroad and then having to face it here at home. Imran Yousuf, a Marine veteran of the Afghanistan war, is a bouncer at Pulse, the site of the killings. According to *Stars and Stripes*, he acted quickly to help others to flee. And Army Captain Antonia Brown, who deployed to Kuwait in 2010-2011, was killed in the massacre. However, as we know, high profile mass shooting is not the only violence people face here at home. The Friends Committee on National Legislation sent me an email today stating: This isn't just about one killing, or even a series of mass killings. Gun violence permeates our society. The current stats are already alarming:

- 1,500 shootings in Chicago so far this year.

## Michael McPhearson



- On average, 51 women in the U.S. are shot and killed by an intimate partner each month.
- 20,000 gun suicides in the U.S. every year

It is clearer to me than ever before that the only way we will succeed in confronting and ending war is through working for peace at home and peace abroad. We cannot have one without the other. They are inextricably linked. Can we really expect the people of Chicago to act to end wars abroad when they face extreme levels of violence and see no path to peace in their own neighborhoods? Can the LGBTQ community be expected to join us in the streets to end wars abroad if we are not addressing the violence they face here at home? But most important for us is to understand for ourselves that this violence is linked. That there are direct connections between U.S. foreign policy and the mass shooting in Orlando, and many of the same forces that cause economic and social distress in Chicago and Appalachia leading to hate and gun violence cause the lack of opportunity and resources in countries around the world that leads to militias and wars.

We must be clear on this so that as a peace movement we can help people uncover and see the connections that are there. I believe

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# MEMORIAL DAY IN D.C.

For year two of our twelve year campaign against the Pentagon's revisionist efforts to distort the history of the American War in Viet Nam, representatives of VFP's Full Disclosure campaign descended upon Washington, DC for Memorial Day. Twelve of us delivered 147 letters. All of these letters addressed the pain, suffering, anger, and, most of the time, the despair of feeling the impact of an immoral, unjust war.

We gathered at 10:00am at Roger Ehrlich's amazing Bell Tower installation directly across from the Lincoln Memorial and near The Wall. At 10:30am we descended into The Wall with letters in hand -- each in a special Full Disclosure envelope with "PLEASE READ ME" emblazoned across the front of the envelope. People responded as we hoped they would -- they read the



letters. Please note: the National Parks Service puts all material left at The Wall in an archival collection; last year they asked permission to display some of the letters we left in their upcoming museum.

At 11:30am we unfurled a banner that read: "WE REMEMBER THE THREE MILLION SOUTH-

## Doug Rawlings

EAST ASIANS KILLED IN THE WAR" at the foot of the Reflecting Pool connecting the Lincoln Memorial to the Washington Memorial. We solemnly proceeded down the east side of the pool and back again in our attempt to awaken the people gathered in DC to yet another devastating cost to this war.

Finally, Peter Morgan, myself, and Roger Ehrlich attended the official ceremony at The Wall at 1:00pm. After listening to the usual speeches and martial music commemorating the sacrifice of American soldiers, we joined a half dozen other organizations in laying a wreath at The Wall. It was a simple wreath -- white carnations with a black banner and "VETERANS FOR PEACE" inscribed in gold. I think it went well with all of the red, white, and blue surrounding it.



# GOLDEN RULE BEGINS PACIFIC NORTHWEST VOYAGE



*Golden Rule sails past two destroyers during Fleet Week in Portland, Oregon.*

The *Golden Rule* has successfully begun her epic Pacific Northwest voyage. Sailing from Humboldt Bay in northern California, along the Oregon coast, up the Columbia River to the Willamette River, the *Golden*

*Rule* and her intrepid crew arrived in Portland, Oregon on Tuesday, June 7, for five days of action and public meetings. Highlights included a highly visible presence on the water during the Fleet Week pa-

rade of Navy war ships. The bright red sails of the *Golden Rule*, emblazoned with a giant peace symbol and VFP logo, provided a welcome contrast to the glorification of the killing machines of war.

We were well received and we enjoyed some good conversations with sailors, who were remarkably receptive to the *Golden Rule's* mission of sailing for a nuclear-free world.

Portland was the first stop on a four-month voyage that will take the *Golden Rule* to thirty ports in Oregon, Washington and British Columbia. Reaching way beyond the choir, the *Golden Rule* will participate in four wooden boat shows and reaching out to many groups of faith, mariners, historians, indigenous, Marshallese and Japanese people, and sailing clubs, among others.

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# 2016 LOBBY DAYS A HUGE SUCCESS



Maurice Martin, George Johnson, Willie Hager & Jan Ruhman on the Hill.

Our 2nd annual lobby days are behind us, but that doesn't mean that our legislative efforts are over!

We have learned a lot from this experience, and we are ready to move forward in the upcoming year as we grow our legislative work.

**Thank you** to everyone who participated in the 2016 Lobby Days, whether by coming to D.C, visiting in your home state, calling your local offices, or posting online. It is clear from the feedback we have received from Congressional staff members and VFP supporters that **WE WERE HEARD!**

The focus of our visits this year were on the recent increase in spending on nuclear weapons and on moving the Agent Orange Relief and Recovery Act. We highlighted the important issue of deported veterans, and discovered that many of our leaders were unaware that this was happening to men and women who served our country. We also asked all Representatives and the Senators to

## Casey Stinemetz

take a public stand to oppose hate speech and Islamophobia.

### A few things we learned:

- Schedule meetings in advance! (And follow up with the offices if you don't hear back).
- Keep e-mails to staff members short, concise and to the point.
- Tell your personal story. They will respond to your authenticity!
- During the visit, stay on topic and have a clear ask.
- Get contact information to follow up after the visit.

Even though our Lobby Days are over, you can still take action!

- E-mail [casey@veteransforpeace.org](mailto:casey@veteransforpeace.org) to join our legislative e-mail list
- Schedule a visit with your representative or senator
- Donate to VFP to support our legislative work.



# VETERANS CHALLENGE ISLAMOPHOBIA



VCI staff Hutto & Maier with others at Beyond the Choir training.

Veterans For Peace launched VeteransChallengeIslamophobia.org in response to the horrible increase in anti-Muslim bigotry this fall. Michael McPhearson recognized the threat to Muslim-Americans and the danger of additional wars in Muslim countries. VFP Member Jim Driscoll, a Vietnam veteran, raised start-up funding for VCI from two long-term

peace donors, enabling VFP to develop a plan and begin recruiting members of VFP and Iraq Veterans Against the War for the campaign.

Upon receiving a \$200,000 grant from the Open Society Foundations, VFP set up a Program Committee, drafted a sign-on statement, developed a website and hired national staff, with strong recommenda-

tions from local chapters. Navy Veteran Jonathan W. Hutto, Sr., was brought on board as the National VCI Organizer.

Jim and Jonathan, in consultation with Michael and local VFP chapter leadership, hired four national staff members. Jacob Maier, from the New York/New Jersey corridor,

## Jonathan Hutto, Sr.

was discharged from the Marines in 2015 as a Conscientious Objector and has been very active within both IVAW and VFP. Jacob just recently completed the Veterans Progressive Leadership Institute (VPLI) sponsored by Beyond the Choir (BTC).

Logan M. Isaac joined the VCI Staff from the state of North Carolina. Logan is an academic, author and advocate who was discharged honorably from the Army in 2006.

Ramon Mejia and Nate Terani are both Muslim activists who have joined the staff. Ramon is based in the Dallas-Fort-Worth area. He enlisted in the Marines out of economic necessity in 2001 and was attached to the force that invaded Iraq in 2003. Ramon represented VCI in

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activities are combined with these and other peace groups, and include participating in monthly peace vigils at Shannon airport on the second Sunday of each month.

During the past year, VFP Ireland chairperson, Edward Horgan, was prosecuted for a direct action taken at Shannon airport, during which he attempted to search and investigate four U.S. military aircraft at the airport. The charges were dismissed as the prosecution was unable to prove that a VFP member was in an unauthorised area at the time.

Meetings were also held in Dublin, including hosting visitors from VFP USA, led by President of the Board of VFP Barry Ladendorf. This meeting included a ceremony at the Irish Garden of Remembrance in Dublin. Additional meet-

ings were held in Belfast and Letterkenny in County Donegal.

*How do you think serving in Ireland's military compares to serving in the U.S.?*

Serving in the Irish military is very different from serving in the military of large states such as the U.S. and UK. The Republic of Ireland has not been involved in any war since the foundation of the state in 1922, and we were notably neutral throughout World War Two. However, the Irish Defence Forces have taken a very active part in United Nations peacekeeping since 1955, and this forms an essential part of Irish positive or active neutrality. Due to limited resources, the IDF has no effective air force and only a limited naval or coastal protection force. For these reasons, the Irish Defence Forces have developed a very good reputation for

UN peacekeeping, and this is strongly supported by the vast majority of Irish citizens.

*Who is your main audience?*

The general public in Ireland, with a view to informing them of the erosion of Ireland's active neutrality, and politicians with a view to restore Irish neutrality.

*Anything else to add?*

We value the support we have received from VFP USA and VFP UK. We feel it is essential to internationalise all our efforts to promote international peace because, while small groups acting in isolation can achieve a certain amount locally, it is only by concerted actions and cooperation between all groups and individuals internationally that the very necessary progress can be achieved towards attaining international global peace.



## OKINAWA, JAPAN - EDO HEINRICH-SANCHEZ

*What issues are important to your work in Okinawa?*

While Okinawa comprises only 0.6% of Japanese territory, it houses 74% of the U.S. bases in Japan. This fact emphasizes the blatant unequal treatment which has worked its way into the Okinawan consciousness, leading to a change in the thinking of anti-base activists. To the Okinawan people's passionate pacifism was added a growing awareness that they were being treated as a colony of Japan -- or as some would have it, a dual colony of Japan and the US. And terms like "discrimination," which had not been part of the political vocabulary, moved to the centre of the public discourse.

Currently, we are working on a statement to be released in a press conference concerning the kidnapping, rape and murder of a Okinawa woman, 20 year old Rina Shimabukuro. She was murdered by a former U.S. Marine working on Kadena Airbase. What is even more sad and painful about this incident is that he is married to an Okinawa woman,

having adopted his wife's family name. They both have a baby. He is reported in the news as Kenneth Franlin Shinzato.

*How did you find out about VFP? What attracted you to us?*

In December, 2014, a special VFP Delegation came to Okinawa to show its solidarity with the people of Okinawa and as promised in May of 2015, a VFP Letter of Support for Governor Onaga signed by Barry Ladendorf was presented to Okinawa Prefecture Officials in Washington D.C. by Tarak Kauff, VFP board member.

*What are your main actions and strategies?*

February 10, 2015: Outside the gate of the U.S. Marine Corp's Camp Schwab at Henoko in northern Okinawa, a sign announced that this was the 220th day of the sit-in there. Next to it stood an elderly man holding a flag bearing the words, DO NOT DISCRIMINATE AGAINST OKINAWANS. He told me he had not been given it by any organization, but had had it made



Edo Heinrich-Sanchez, C. Douglas Lummis, Bishop Nakamura, Masahide Ota, Yoshikazu Makishi

with his own money. "This is it," he said to me urgently. "This is the issue!" His flag symbolizes the sea change which the Okinawan anti-base movement has undergone in the last fifteen years or so, a change in thinking that has led to a major political realignment, which in turn has affected the shape of the increasingly desperate political confrontation taking place there now.

Briefly stated, for many years Okinawan politics was a contest between the anti-war progressives and the fewer but richer conservatives, who didn't much mind the bases so long as the money kept coming in. Then, in 1995 an Okinawan elementary school girl was gang raped by three GIs, and the island exploded. An all-Okinawa protest rally was

held, which was attended by progressives and conservatives alike - some 70,000 people, which is a huge number in a population of 1,300,000. The U.S. and Japanese governments realized they had to do something. What they came up with was to promise to close the U.S. Marine Corps Air Station at Futenma, right in the middle of densely populated Ginowan City. People rejoiced - for a day. On the following day they learned that the air facility was not to be taken out of the Prefecture, but relocated in the village of Henoko, in Nago City, up north. Joy was replaced by

outrage.

Almost twenty years have elapsed since then, and so far the anti-base protest has prevented the new base from being built. The Tokyo Government, finding that it can no longer prevail in Okinawa with its usual methods - money, back room deals, false promises, divide and rule - has launched an all-out frontal attack on Okinawa and all it stands for and believes in. It seems they are aiming to break the spirit of this brave and independent-minded people once and for all. I believe



amount of support from VFP members in the USA especially Barry Ladendorf, Gene Marx and Gerry Condon. I think that for VFP to spread further around the world current members must be ready and able to offer support to veterans in other countries.

*What are your main actions and strategies?*

We have been running school workshops for a while now. We go into schools and universities and present an honest view of why people join the military, what happens in training and what war is actually like. The students are always receptive to our message and I think we have woken up a few teachers to the ongoing strategy of the military to capture the imagination of our society.

In the last year we have carried out two medal protests at Downing Street, London (home of the Prime Minister). The first action was carried out to challenge militarism by discarding some of its most potent symbols. The second action was in direct response to the UK decision to attack Syria. It was widely reported by the main stream media and was viewed online by millions of people.

This year we have been carrying out a re-structure of VFP UK. We are focusing on supporting and encouraging members to form local groups and to get active in their own towns and cities. This has been successful with new groups forming and becoming active around the country. We are also moving to a much more horizontal structure with no central executive and intend to further our practice of the consensus model of decision making.

We hold our Annual Conference in November on the weekend of Remembrance Sunday. This year we were joined by VFP members from the USA and it was something special to walk with them to The Cenotaph under our banner "Never Again" with our wreath of white poppies. This November we hope to have veterans from Ireland, Australia, Germany and Holland with us. It

## UNITED KINGDOM - BEN GRIFFIN



Members of VFP-UK march to The Cenotaph.

*What issues are important to your work in the U.K.?*

The United Kingdom is one of the most aggressive countries that has ever existed. There are only 22 countries in the world that we have not invaded at some point. So in order to serve the cause of world peace it is vital that there are Veterans For Peace challenging the war making and militarism of the United Kingdom.

Those of us brought up in the UK were taught to believe that Britain is a noble defender of freedom and rights. That we defend the helpless from evil aggressors. That our Armed Forces are somehow less brutal and play "by the rules". That our Armed Forces are small but they are the "best" in the world and as a result Britain doesn't lose wars. All of this is of course nonsense, but these ideas are commonly held within the UK and make it a lot easier for our politicians and Generals

to lead us into war. The challenge facing VFP UK is to dispel this nonsense.

*How did you find out about VFP? What attracted you to us?*

In July 2011 I was giving a talk in Housmans Books, London about military recruitment. At the end of the meeting Barry Ladendorf approached me and introduced himself as President of VFP San Diego. I told him that we were looking to form an antiwar veterans group in the UK. Barry suggested checking out VFP and said that he would send over some VFP information and resources from the USA.

That night I got home and checked out the VFP website; the Statement of Purpose was a document that could be followed by the veterans of any nation. After meeting Barry we set about forming a VFP in the UK. We had a great

would be fantastic if VFP Members could make it again from the USA.

*How do you think serving in U.K.'s military compares to serving in the U.S.?*

There are some tragic similarities between the UK and U.S. military. One is that the primary function of a sailor, soldier or airperson in the UK and U.S. militaries is to follow orders without question, no matter what the orders are, even if those orders contradict International Law, UN Conventions or the Geneva Conventions.

Another similarity is the arrogance of our military and those that serve within it. This is hardly surprising given the arrogance of the societies we come from.

*Who is your main audience?*

Our regular audience in the UK would be folk who identify as anti-war, but we have also had support from people with a wide range of views and political backgrounds. Our target audience is the general population, veterans and serving soldiers. We are highly supportive of every active duty soldier who approaches us.

*Anything else to add?*

Members of Veterans For Peace, please accept our invitation to attend our Annual Conference in London this November. There will be three days of events culminating in our walk to The Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday under our banner "Never Again". There will be three of us at Convention in SF this summer if you would like to know more.

[www.vfpuk.org](http://www.vfpuk.org) | [coord@vfpuk.org](mailto:coord@vfpuk.org) | [twitter.com/vfpuk](https://twitter.com/vfpuk) | [facebook.com/veteransforpeace.org.uk](https://facebook.com/veteransforpeace.org.uk)



## TIJUANA, MEXICO

*Tell us a little about your chapter.*

In Spring, 2015, the Deported Veterans Support House in Tijuana, Mexico formed VFP Chapter 176 through our long-standing relationships with U.S. VFP members George Johnson, Willie Hager and Jan Ruhman. The chapter is made up of U.S. deported veterans currently residing in Tijuana. The main work of the Tijuana chapter is to leverage the work of VFP legislative committees to protect the rights of deported veterans.

*What are your major concerns and what actions are you taking?*

In April, Representative Ruben Gallego and a group of veteran members of Congress introduced H.R. 5012: Restoring Respect for Immigrant Service in Uniform Act that could help deported veterans return to the U.S. and reunite with their families. The bill would also prevent the removal of service members and veterans in the future.

The chapter also supports the broader work of the Deported Veterans Support House, which is extensive. We can provide temporary shelter for up to 9 deported veterans and coordinate with other local groups to provide direct services to deported veterans and their families. These services include a toy drive for the children of the deported veterans for the holiday season, weekly support groups



**Hector Barajas & Daniel Torres at Deported Veterans Safe House.**

and weekly religious services. We work in partnership with employers to provide job training to put them on a path to self-sufficiency.

*Anything else to add?*

The house maintains a database for deported U.S. veterans around the world, promoting media awareness of the plight of deported U.S. veterans. We also work with a service officer on filing for VA benefits and upgrades. And we are working in partnership with the ACLU and others to provide legal counsel on benefits, citizenship, humanitarian parole and post-conviction relief.

Here's one example of what we can do -- In January, 2016, we

were able to welcome one of our residents back to the United States. Former Marine Daniel Torres, who came to the U.S. as a young child with his family, lied about being a U.S. citizen when he enlisted because he wanted to serve his adopted country and prove his loyalty. When it was discovered that he was not a citizen, he was deported to Mexico and stayed at the deported veterans' house. That's when we began our work.

First, we put him in touch with an immigration law specialist from the ACLU. Their hard work paid off when Daniel was granted U.S. citizenship April 22, 2016.

Visit us at [deportedveteranssupporthouse.org](http://deportedveteranssupporthouse.org)



# VFP STATEMENT ON ORLANDO SHOOTING

We at Veterans For Peace express our deep condolences to the families who have become victims of the horrific tragedy that took place Sunday night in Orlando, Florida. We join with peace-loving people everywhere in grieving this senseless loss of life. Despite many recent legal recognitions of lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people's rights and positive changes in social attitude in the U.S., this tragedy is a reminder of the violence that the LGBTQ community continues to experience. It is also not lost on us that this horrific tragedy occurred during LGBTQ Pride month, which this year coincides with the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, a time of peace and intense self-reflection. It pains us to see that these periods of joy, celebration, and peace have been marred so violently with such horror.

Tragedies like this often lead people to look for someone or something to blame. Veterans For Peace rejects attempts to perpetuate hatred against the LGBTQ and Muslim communities. We ask all to resist this temptation. We call on all people to challenge the forces of divi-

sion and hatred, and to stand against all forms of hate; and at this time particularly against homophobia, Islamophobia and anti-Muslim bigotry. Let us instead recommit ourselves to working toward a world without hatred and prejudice.

Mass shootings have become all too common. After each incident we search for answers in many places. As a nation, in order to find answers that will help create the change we seek, we must accept that this horrific event is one link in a now long chain of tragedies of wars, hate, violence and fear. We must work to end violence both at home and abroad.

Transportation and communication have made our global home smaller. Emotions, ideas and information travel at the speed of data into our homes and over our phones. We can no longer ignore the fact that what happens in communities thousands of miles apart affects billions of people. Wars abroad take a toll on families and communities here in the U.S. Therefore, we must work for peace at home and abroad. We cannot

have one without the other. They are inextricably linked. We must begin to question all who attempt to divide us. We must reject those who teach that somehow the "Other" is stealing our jobs or conspiring against us, because of our religion, our sex, the color of our skin or our freedoms. We must reject that violence is the solution.

If you are ready to make a difference, it is time to get off the violence merry-go-round. Join peace, labor and justice groups or any group that is working for peace, justice, equal rights and the global environment for a sustainable future. We must put forth a greater effort to transform our society. Let us work for a world where everyone is valued, people's basic needs are met and human dignity is recognized.



*(Continued from page 3)*

peace is justice in action, and justice means addressing injustice everywhere, including here at home. So we have to believe and work in the framework of peace at home peace abroad. Those of us who say we are in the peace movement cannot end war alone. We must join together with domestic issue movements, develop a vision of a new future and narrative we can all believe in. When enough of us believe peace is possible and work to bring it about at home and abroad; we will have peace.



*(Continued from page 5)*

late May in response to white supremacists targeting an Islamic Center in Dallas.

Nate Terani, a veteran of the U.S. Navy and the first Muslim American member of the Navy Presidential Honor Guard, joined VFP in direct response to the increase hatred against Muslims within our society. An Iranian-American and member of VFP, Nate had already anchored the joint VFP-IVAW team who confronted Donald Trump in Arizona.

In the hours after the attack in Orlando, both Ramon and Nate

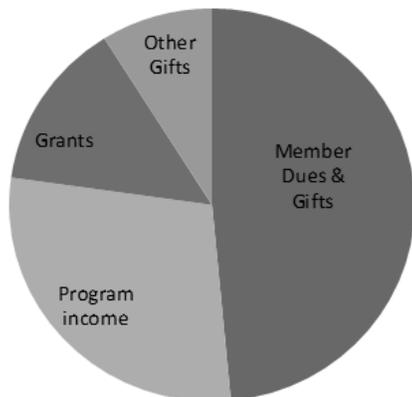
were on the ground in Dallas and Phoenix ensuring that Veterans were on the front lines combating hate. To show VCI's support for the local Muslim community, Jake began bringing care packages to local mosques .

Along with being proactive about hate in our society, the project aspires to build a broad base of veterans, reaching out to traditional veterans organizations. We seek to use our credibility to encourage more conservative audiences to confront their Islamophobia. VCI is fully funded through November.



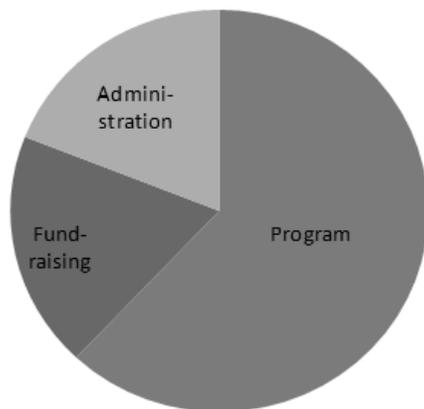
# 2015 ANNUAL REPORT

## INCOME



Member Dues & Donations	\$232,414	49%
Non-Member Donations	\$42,574	9%
Grants/Foundations	\$64,700	14%
Program income	\$139,504	29%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$479,192</b>	<b>100%</b>

## EXPENSES



Program	\$337,479	62%
Fundraising	\$103,382	19%
Administration	\$106,483	19%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$547,344</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Thank you!*

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- International **chapters added** in Ireland and Mexico, and a U.S. chapter in Janesville, WI
- **335 new members added** nationwide.
- Yoko Ono, Pete McCloskey and Masahide Ota joined our **Advisory Board**

MARCH – VFP helps organize hundreds to **protest drone warfare at Creech AFB** in Nevada. Local TV ad asks drone pilots not to fly.

MAY -- **Full Disclosure event at Vietnam Wall** in D.C. marks 50 years since U.S. invasion of Vietnam, and 40 years since our departure.

**First Annual VFP Lobby Day.** In D.C. and around the country, dozens of legislative visits are made.

More than 50 chapters around the country bring the peace message to Memorial Day parades and sponsor **alternative memorials highlighting the cost of war in human lives.**

The **Swords to Plowshares Tower displayed on the mall in Washington D.C.** throughout the Memorial Day weekend is visited by thousands.

JUNE – Historic **Golden Rule Peace Boat is re-launched** in Eureka, CA to begin mission for a nuclear-free world. Tours California throughout the summer.

JULY – Three **VFP-UK members return their war medals** in ceremony at 10 Downing Street.

AUGUST – **Ad placed in *The Air Force Times*** reminding drone pilots that their missions violate domestic and international law. TV ads with a similar message run in several cities.

SEPTEMBER -- **International Day of Peace celebrations** in at least 25 cities on September 21.

**Iowa Chapters sponsor 9-city speaking tour on national security** issues with Ray McGovern and Colleen Rowley.

OCTOBER – Chapters carry out actions at local hospitals to **protest U.S. bombing of hospital in Kunduz, Afghanistan.**

VFP Maine sponsors **15 day Walk For Peace in Maine**, with a focus on militarization of the seas.

NOVEMBER – At least 70 **Armistice Day celebrations** around the country reclaim November 11 for peace.

Major presence at **School of the Americas Watch at Fort Benning, GA**

DECEMBER — VFP **delegation to Jeju, South Korea and Okinawa, Japan** in solidarity with ongoing popular resistance to new U.S. military bases in their communities.



# CHAPTER REPORTS

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## CHAPTER 1 - PORTLAND, ME

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**Richard Clement**

Chapter 1 has been active locally and internationally. We had members who traveled to Jeju Island and Okinawa. At both of these locations new military bases are being built or expanded to support the announced U.S. "Pivot to Asia". Members joined daily protests with local citizens to try to impede the construction process that is destroying the environment.

Members also traveled to Odessa, Ukraine to bear witness on the 2nd anniversary of the massacre there. They were there to ensure the civic rights of the people of Odessa were upheld to hold a memorial program and to report on the injustices that took place.

Locally, members met with the Cultural Director of a Somali mosque. We wanted his community to know that our chapter would stand with them in situations concerning Islamophobia. A beginning has been forged which we hope to expand upon in the future.

A GDAMS (Global Day Against Military Spending) media event was held in Portland on tax day. Members spoke about the bloated Pentagon budget and also the very true human costs of war. Local media coverage was actually better than expected.

## CHAPTER 10 - ALBANY, NY

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**John Amidon**

Chapter 10, Albany marched in the Memorial Day Parade. Members have been active in many local protests along with working to support other organizations such as Granies For Peace. John Amidon and Elliott Adams protested the Trump Rally at South Point Casino in Las

Vegas. Their banners read, Veterans to Mr Trump: End the Hate speech Against Islam. Then when Mr. Trump came to Albany he was protested by members here including Dan Wilcox and Brian Trautman along with Tarak Kauff and others.

Presently we are working on the 18th annual Kateri Peace Conference, Friday, August 19th and Saturday, August 20, 2016. More information may be found at [kateripeaceconference.org](http://kateripeaceconference.org)

## CHAPTER 14 - GAINESVILLE, FL

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**Doug Bernal**

The past few months have been both joyous and somber for Chapter 14. The 2016 Annual Peace Poetry Contest and 2nd Annual Peace Scholarship awards took place, recognizing both young voices for peace and students actively working towards a better future for themselves and their communities. David Swanson, 2015 Nobel Prize Nominee and author of the book, *War is a Lie*, visited the chapter, speaking on his book and offering input on current and past operations abroad. Chapter 14 was not able to hold their annual Memorial Mile event. Recent actions by the former City of Gainesville commission led to intense construction where the display was to be held.

## CHAPTER 21 - NORTHERN NJ

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**Wendy Fisher**

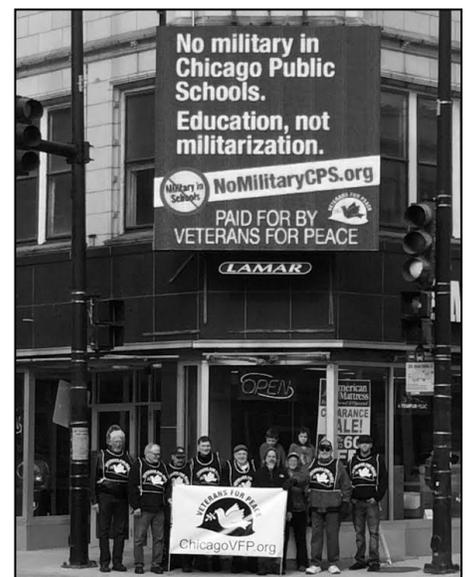
Members of Chapter 21 participated in the St. Patrick's Day for All parade in Queens, N.Y., an event that originated when the better-known Manhattan parade excluded the LGBT community. On April 2, members attended a mov-

ing memorial and celebration of the life of Chapter 34's dynamic Bill Gilson. On April 24 we participated in the annual N.J. Peace Action luncheon where we heard a talk by Hibakusha and Hiroshima Maiden Shigeko Sasamori. On the same day, other members attended a commemoration of the 1964 U.S. invasion of the Dominican Republic. Along with Chapter 34, members participated in and staffed a literature table at The Left Forum in NYC, May 20 - 22, an event which drew 4,000 activists. On May 1st, many members participated in the inaugural event of the Northern New Jersey chapter of Jewish Voice for Peace, a well-attended gathering at which an excellent movie, *Where Should the Birds Fly?* was screened and discussed. Finally, many of our members joined with Chapter 34, IVAW, VVAW, and the Veterans Peace Council to observe Memorial Day at Battery Park in lower Manhattan where we remembered those who have died as a result of the horrors of war.

## CHAPTER 26 - CHICAGO, IL

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**Arny Stieber & Joe Walsh**



Members of Ch. 26 at their billboard

In the fall of 2013 the Chapter began attending and speaking at the Chicago Public Schools Board meetings. This simple beginning has mushroomed into the Education Not Militarization initiative that is now getting noticed locally and nationally. In March we rolled out our billboard campaign that focuses on our web site NoMilitary.org. We've engaged CPS Board members and have met with the heads of the Chicago JROTC. Our message is that students need to develop critical thinking skills and VFP can provide the balance to the military "education" that 10,000 CPS youth are receiving.

In March we screened the documentary *Of Men and War* for the community. It generated substantial dialogue and the Rush Hospital "Road Home" program will now be showing it to their constituents.

We were recently approached by Barry Ladendorf about hosting the 2017 Convention. We polled our active members and have decided that Chicago would be an excellent location for 2017. We will need help from nearby Chapters and from Chapters that have hosted previous conventions. It is a major undertaking, but we're determined to make 2017 the largest, most educational, most comprehensive convention to date.

## CHAPTER 27 - MINNEAPOLIS, MN

### Dave Logsdon

With the only blimp in the Minneapolis Annual MayDay Parade, Chapter 27 was a big hit! Before thousands of citizens lining the parade route we brought the message that the U.S. Military is the world's greatest polluter. Thanks to the hard work of Barry Riesch and Craig Wood and many others we managed to get it airborne through the entire parade. We flew our flags and received a lot of applause. A special shout out to Tarak Kauff and the New York VFPers for loaning it to us.

We've had a rocky few months with moving our office and the huge



Ch 27 in May Day parade.

loss of our spiritual leader and treasurer, Wayne Wittman. We've been speaking in schools, ringing bells and planning for a memorable summer with David Swanson coming to town, Peacestock (with Chapter 115), and our co-sponsorship of the Hiroshima/Nagasaki ceremony at the Lake Harriet Peace Garden.

We are looking forward to seeing our brothers and sisters in Berkeley for the Convention!

## CHAPTER 34 - NEW YORK, NY

### Bob Keilbach

Chapter 34 is active in a number of extraordinary projects:

Howard Zinn Fund: \$5000 Partnership Grant awarded for "Faces of Struggle" project, which includes an exhibit of images of resistance, connecting community members with incarcerated U.S. Political Prisoners. This is an opportunity to strengthen relationships with social justice organizations with whom we are in solidarity. Proposal written by Saretta Morgan with Frank Stearns and Susan Schnall.

Veterans Challenge Islamophobia: VFP provided part-time organizer to work with IVAW and VFP NYC and NJ on projects challenging Islamophobia in our communities.

Memorial Day: Captain James Yee and VFP NYC President Susan Schnall led a procession with Mecigaya Pip Band (bagpipers), a flag-draped coffin, and pictures of Agent Orange victims through Battery Park. Over 80 participants

spoke about the true meaning of Memorial Day for veterans, their families and all victims of war. We distributed 500 flyers reminding people of the true costs of war.

Bill Gilson's extraordinary life was celebrated by over 200 attendees; 13th Anniversary Demonstration Against Invasion of Iraq; Saretta Morgan Writing Workshop, assisting writing Letters to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall; St Pat's-for-All Parade; Counter-Recruitment/educational events at schools; Monthly Peace Vigil; members went to DC to present letters to the Vietnam Memorial Wall.

We will march for Oscar Lopez Rivera on Puerto Rican Day, and Chelsea Manning in the Heritage of Pride Parade.



Susan Schnall and Chaplain James Yee leading Memorial Day Procession

## CHAPTER 35 - SPOKANE, WA

### Hollis Higgins

Greeting all Chapters! VFP Past President, Elliot Adams, is here for Memorial weekend, speaking at church, Community Building, and interviews with the Green Progressive Archive and KYRS Thin Air Community Radio show "Praxis." In April we sent a copy of our VET LIT book/CD/DVD and \$100 to Hoa Binh Chapter via our great friend Richard M. Hastie on his photographic tour of Vietnam. We corresponded with VFP member Dana Visalli just back from Syria, and forwarded his letters to our list, along with great interviews from Regis Trembly. Mikel Stevenson delivered a letter and \$100.00 to the Sikh Temple which was vandalized, and

shared food with church members. We applied to join the "End The Occupation/BDS" movement. We organized a protest at the federal courthouse supporting the ACLU in prosecuting Mitchell & Jessen, Assoc. reverse engineering of the SERE Training at Fairchild AFB creating the torture regimes used at Abu Graib & Guantanamo. We are pursuing a radio program at KYRS to be called "One Hour Left."

Eight members plan to See You In Berkeley!!

## CHAPTER 41 - CAPE COD, MA

### Duke Ellis

In February we met with leaders of the Cape and Islands Veterans Outreach Center and created the "Cpl. Jeffrey M. Lucey VFP Direct Aid Fund", administered by CIVOC and funded by Chapter 041 to provide financial aid to vets in crisis.

Our 21st annual "Voices of Peace" Poetry Contest went off without a hitch and with no signs of slowing down: 702 poems submitted from 24 schools and 53 teachers facilitating their students' efforts. This year many of the poems showed remarkable empathy for the victims of war both civilian and military.

Later in the Spring we provided financial and vocal support for Pat Scanlon's "Extremists for Peace" music video. In May the chapter was asked to join "Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America" in marking National Gun Violence Awareness Day on June 2. We were happy to add our voices to the call 'domestic disarmament'.

Finally, we learned that Amalie Scheltema had passed away in 2015. She and her husband Rudi, a WW II veteran, were strong supporters of our chapter, of national VFP and led peace and justice efforts on the Cape for decades. We were fortunate to have them work with us for several years and for their strong support for our poetry contest.



Teacher & prize-winning poets. Photo: Alan Belanich

## CHAPTER 58 - WOODSTOCK, NY

### Jay Wenk

We are located in Woodstock, NY, the 'ostensible' home of Peace and Love. We are also home to Woodstock's largest employer, Ametek-Rotron. They are a war equipment supplier to the Pentagon, especially parts for Drones. Their premises are under high security. They claim to be 'good' because they operate the local public Ambulance service, for free. Nevertheless, we are starting to prepare a program of protest activity against this Devil in our midst. We'll keep you informed.

## CHAPTER 63 - NEW HAMPSHIRE

### Sally-Alice Thompson

We have had a busy tabling season: at the theater where Christmas Truce was shown, at the Tribute to Women in the Military, at Veterans Day at the legislature, and at the Memorial Day observance at Veterans Memorial Park.

A number of us attended the theater where *Same, Same But Different* was presented, where our member, Suel Jones, read a passage from his book, *Meeting the Enemy*. A friend of our chapter, Mark Rudd, accompanied a VFP tour of VietNam. We had an Award Dinner for our treasurer and photographer, Willard Hunter, and for Bill Prinkey, who has spent

many volunteer hours as our representative at Veterans Memorial Park.

We were the prime sponsors and organizers of a local Democracy Awakening event, which attracted almost a hundred people. Thirty other peace and justice organizations participated. Several of our members who volunteer at the Visitors Center of Veterans Memorial Park were honored at an Appreciation Breakfast. Our president, Charles Powell, visited the office of U.S. Senator Tom Udall to alert him of the facts of veterans being deported. The field representative with whom he spoke was not aware of the problem until informed of it by Charles.

## CHAPTER 67 - LONG BEACH, CA

### Richard Madeira

Veterans For Peace 067 in Long Beach California continues to accomplish the goals of our grant as recipient of the 2014 Zinn Fund, to support and accomplish specific projects that facilitate peace and understanding within our own communities.

The Zinn Fund grant has facilitated a network of 6 peace clubs, where young people can network, educate themselves and interact with other youth beside vets and local activists. The young people have participated in tabling at peace events, assisted in displaying the Teen Memorial that honors the over 500 teens that have been lost in our current wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Somalia, Yemen, Libya (and on and on), attending our annual summer Peace Camp and organizing educational seminars in our local Long Beach community. Students from the peace clubs will be involved in the planning and execution of a mural of peace entitled "Commit to Peace" on a wall located wall near the major north/south freeway in Long Beach this summer. Peace clubbers will also attend our Summer Peace camp in the Santa Monica Mountains for an entire week. Their growth, awareness and empower-

ment has been truly amazing to observe. Again, we acknowledge and thank the Zinn Fund for their assistance with our important work for peace in Long Beach.

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## CHAPTER 69 - SAN FRANCISCO, CA

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### Denny Riley

The VFP National Convention is happening in Berkeley, California, August 11 to 15, Thursday to Monday, on the UC Berkeley Clark Kerr campus. The President's Reception kicks it off Thursday evening in the Ginkgo Courtyard, with music, food and drink, and a chance to connect with friends you haven't seen in a year. The wealth of Convention speakers includes Ann Jones, Andrew Bacevich, Helen Caldicott, Antonia Juhasz, Roy Scranton, and Oliver Stone. Saturday night's banquet is in the beautiful Pauley Ballroom overlooking the Berkeley campus, where all plates and utensils are compostable. Yoga and meditation and an AA meeting are scheduled early every morning, and movies will be shown late at night with plenaries and workshops in between. And of course there is Berkeley – wild, cerebral, romantic, quirky Berkeley, and all the Bay Area beyond. Miss this convention and you'll be missing something to be talked about for years. P.S. The days are warm but the nights can be chilly so bring that article of clothing you never thought you'd wear in the summer in California. And another P.S. no smoking anything anywhere on the campus.

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## CHAPTER 71 - SONOMA CNTY, CA

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### Bill Simon

Our Chapter participates each spring in the annual Sonoma State University Social Justice Week educational event. This year we provided individual presentations on the following topics: the Veteran Suicide Epidemic, Hidden Costs of War, Lies at the Root of All Wars, Truth-In-Recruiting, and the relationship between Substance Abuse and PTSD in Trauma Recovery. A lively group

discussion, including audience and presenters, was facilitated after the presentations.

We took this opportunity to set up our 22 Veteran Suicides Every Day display, which includes a large banner and 22 wooden X's. We set up our display indoors, which was a first. In addition, we assembled a modified display and tabled at a SSU lecture ballroom where *New York Times* bestselling author, David Talbot, *The Devil's Chessboard: Allen Dulles, the CIA, and the Rise of America's Secret Government* spoke.

And finally, we have been working with Chapter 69 in support of their considerable efforts to host a fantastic VFP National Convention in Berkeley this August.

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## CHAPTER 80 - DULUTH, MN

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### Phil Anderson

Chapter 80 has had a very busy spring. We co-sponsored a speaker in the Peace & Justice lecture series at the College of St. Scholastica and tabled at five of these lectures. In April we purchased a table at a fund raising Kurdish dinner to build a library in Kobani, Syria.

Every year on April 15 we organize a rally to highlight excessive military spending and call for putting people first. We host a "bean" survey with the public being asked to vote on how they would spend the \$1 Trillion by pouring beans into tubes representing the discretionary budget. Through our membership in Duluth Public Access TV we are now able to share video of our activities on YouTube (search "Tax Day priorities 2015")

After being un-invited from the unofficial Duluth Memorial Day parade 3 years ago, we have organized an annual Memorial Day Observance that "Honors the Fallen, Not the Wars." We honor the sacrifice of all the victims of war -- our troops, the "enemy" and the civilian "collateral" damage. We also

honor those who have sacrificed for peace and justice. We also continue to march with our float in local parades though out the summer, including the 4th of July in Superior, Wisconsin.

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## CHAPTER 87 - SACRAMENTO, CA

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### John Reiger

Once again we helped plan, and participate in, the local Cesar Chavez Day March and Rally. Cesar Chavez was a Navy veteran, a fact not usually mentioned, but one of the reasons we like to be part of this event. He was a fighter for social justice which is probably the main reason we feel our presence is in line with one of VFP's missions. We are always welcome as we support other local peace and justice events. We have also been involved in the effort to defeat a bill in the California legislature (AB 2844) that would penalize firms that support the BDS movement.

Our regularly scheduled Anti-War Vigils continue every Wednesday and we serve monthly at the local homeless shelter. The monthly anti-drone protests at Beale AFB near Sacramento and the yearly one at Creech AFB in Nevada are also on our activity list. We continue to coordinate (with KnowDrones.com) the showing of anti-drone TV commercials on CNN, MSNBC and networks on local TV near military bases around the country. The spots were last shown in Las Vegas.

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## CHAPTER 90 - BROOME CNTY, NY

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### Larry Evans

On the Friday before Mother's Day, the Chapter sponsored a reading of Mark Twain's "War Prayer" by Tim Wolcott of Broome County Peace Action. Then Eileen Patch stepped forward, being introduced as our special guest, Julia Ward Howe. Her words were first spoken in the year 1870 in Boston. Following the carnage of the Civil War, she was calling on mothers throughout the world to unite against war. The

Christ Episcopal Church in Binghamton graciously hosted the event. There were two readings, which were both well attended.

As usual, Chapter 90 had a presence at the St. Patrick's Day and Memorial Day Parades in Binghamton. To help spread our message of peace, VFP Executive Board Member Tom Palumbo joined us for the St. Patrick's Day Parade, along with others from Tioga County, NY. Through the years since 9-11, the crowds have become more and more supportive of our message. Perhaps the country is gradually growing fatigued from our perpetual wars.

In January, several members visited a local mosque in Johnson City, NY, which had an Open House. All who attended were made to feel welcome. Our Chapter is glad it could be a part of this coming together of the community.

## CHAPTER 91 - SAN DIEGO, CA

### Gil Field

"Winter" here in San Diego found Chapter 91 walking in the Martin Luther King Day parade on January 18, hosting a double-booth in the Earth Fair on April 17 and later setting up our "Hometown Arlington West Memorial" in front of the floating USS Midway Museum on Memorial Day.

Chapter members also participated in the demonstrations to shut down Creech Air Force Base in March, and we began a 5 year program to educate the public in hopes of reducing public interest and participation in the annual Miramar Air Show, a huge defense contractor event held here each October.

With the support of public donations, our chapter continued to purchase and personally deliver sleeping bags sets and other life essentials to our estimated 1,000 homeless vets and non-vets who live on the streets downtown, having delivered over 2600 sets as of May 31

Members are now a recognized source of quality commentary by

local TV and radio stations, who often call us for opinions and interviews when world events happen. Our chapter remains invigorated by the post-9/11 vets who are now officers and board members of the chapter, as we rely on the more seasoned vets from the Korean conflict to keep us grounded and reflective.

## CHAPTER 92 - SEATTLE, WA

### Keith Orchard

On April 15, Chapter 92 did our annual tax day leafleting at Westlake Park in Seattle with noted author David Swanson, highlighting the costs of war and the disproportionate amount of the federal discretionary budget that is spent on the military. In the evening David Swanson gave a presentation on the second edition of his book *War Is a Lie* at Town Hall in Seattle, sponsored by chapter 92. About 135 people attended.

On May 1, Chapter 92 marched in Seattle's annual May Day Parade sponsored by El Comite from El Centro de la Raza in Seattle. This is the first time Chapter 92 marched in this immigrants' rights and labor rights parade.

## CHAPTER 93 - SO. CENTRAL MI

### Lynne D. Gilbert



Arlington Michigan Memorial Day

Members of the Chapter joined the Detroit Chapter in a Memorial Day observance, Arlington Michigan, in Detroit.

The Chapter installed a new Peace Pole at the Episcopal Church of the Incarnation in Ann Arbor, with peace messages in English, Arabic, Spanish, Chinese, and Korean. Part of the ceremony honored long-time peace activist Mary Ann Perro-ne of ICPJ, with which the Chapter plans to collaborate on some projects. Also recognized was Korean War veteran Dell Mayes.

As part of Eastern Michigan's annual Martin Luther King, Jr. observances, Chapter President Bob Krzewinski and Vice President Bill Shea presented an hour-long seminar on King's anti-war activism, including the context in the Viet Nam War and King's Riverside Church address. Plans are afoot to repeat the talk in 2017 and extend the presentation to the University of Michigan.

The Chapter tabled at the annual Earth Day at the Leslie Science Center in Ann Arbor on April 17, where kids responded to an opportunity to color a peace message, and will table at the Ann Arbor Green Fair on Friday, June 10, where members will emphasize the environmental costs of war.

## CHAPTER 101 - SAN JOSE, CA

### Phil Pflager

VFP101, in conjunction with the San Jose Peace and Justice Center and the Peninsula Peace and Justice Center, participated in the Veterans For Peace Drone Quilt Project during the months of January, February, and March by procuring Drone Quilts and securing venues for their display in the Bay Area. Drone Quilts were displayed along with foam boards describing the quilt project and the impact of drone warfare on civilian populations.

Quilts were displayed at the First Congregational Church in Palo Alto, the Los Altos library, DeAnza College in Cupertino, three Catholic churches in Palo Alto, the Bechtel International Center and the Markaz Resource Center at Stanford University, and the San Jose Peace and Justice Center.

VFP101 helped "Celebrate the Power of Civil Disobedience" by joining the San Jose Peace and Justice Center on May 25 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the anti-Vietnam War action by four South Bay women--Aileen Hutchinson, Beverly Farquharson, Lisa Kalvelage and Joyce McLean--who blocked a forklift loading napalm bombs at the port of Alviso. Their arrest and trial exposed the horrors of the war; headlines dubbed them "The Napalm Ladies". Lisa's powerful statement at the trial was put to music by Pete Seeger.

In March, our members approved and published the 2016 application for the Gary E. May Peace Scholarship. Area high school seniors and college students are eligible to apply for this \$1000 unrestricted grant by submitting an original essay in response to one of four writing prompts. The deadline for applications is October 15; the recipient will be announced on Armistice Day

## CHAPTER 104 - EVANSVILLE, IN

### John O'Leary

On April 28, we hosted a public lecture by Dr. James MacLeod, author and professor of history at University of Evansville, who spoke about Evansville's experience as a manufacturing center in WWII and the war's social and cultural impacts on the community. A VFP panel discussion on "understanding the true cost of victory" followed, with Indiana's 2012 Toastmaster of the Year, John W. Taylor, serving as moderator.

On May 11, our members served hot dogs, fresh fruit, and cold drinks to about 150 appreciative veterans and staff at the local VA hospital.

## CHAPTER 105 - BALTIMORE, MD

### Jim Baldrige

Charter Chapter member and WWII veteran Dr. Larry Egbert was in a rehab facility to prepare for a cardiac procedure when he died in mid-June. Keep his wife Ellen and all who loved him in your thoughts.

The Chapter tabled at the Farmers Market two days before Memorial Day. We do this three times per year in the Market's Non-Profit space. Following Pres. Obama's visit to Vietnam and to Hiroshima, people were sensitive to the news and were very supportive. People gave us thumbs up, nods and smiles, stopped to get literature and give contributions and we got contacts for new members. Predictably there were two who were not as supportive but the support was far greater by an order of magnitude.



Ch 105 outreach at Farmer's Market

Our annual vigil at the K of C hall which housed the Catonsville draft board records during the American war in Vietnam was on 22 May. Members and supporters vigiled for over an hour, expressing words of peace. Life-long activist Elizabeth McAlister, the wife of Phil Berrigan, told us of the memorial for Dan Berrigan who passed on 30 April, just days before his 95th Birthday. Many of us recounted the connection we felt with the Catonsville Nine event 48 years ago.

## CHAPTER 106 - DALLAS, TX

### Leslie Harris

Chapter 106 started the spring with a "Flush the TPP" demonstration. Marking the 13th anniversary of the Iraq invasion, we hosted a demonstration outside the Bush Library called, "End Endless War," displaying our banner, "MISSION ACCOMPLISHED: WORLD IN CHAOS!" We co-sponsored a large "#ExxonKnew: Divest from Deception" Rally for the Exxon/Mobil Shareholders Meeting.

Members attended: "A Community Conversation" with a former Baltimore PD officer and whistleblower; "Texas & the Syrian Refugee Crisis" at SMU; and Mothers Against Police Brutality's "1st Annual Youth Speakout. We demonstrated in support of New Mexicans whose largest energy company held its shareholder meeting in Texas! Len Ellis spoke for VFP at a "Peaceful Tomorrows" Memorial Day event.

Associate member Leslie Harris was honored to spend time in the Clark County Jail with other VFP members during SHUT DOWN CREECH. She joined Ann Wright and five others on a speaking/action trip to Germany as part of a CODEPINK delegation to accept a humanitarian award. The group protested drone warfare at Ramstein Air Base and at Kelley Barracks/AFRICOM. Leslie and Ann went on to visit refugee camps in Greece, at the Port-of-Athens/ Piraeus: hundreds of tents on asphalt docks...and at Idomeni, near the Macedonian border: thousands of people in tents, in the mud. Heartbreaking!

## CHAPTER 114 - SHEBOYGAN, WI

### Tom Contrestan

It's been a chilly spring along the banks of the majestic Sheboygan River, but we've managed to keep busy. In March, we hosted our 12th annual Concert for Peace and Justice. FYI spots, between acts dealt with U.S. military spending, School of the Americas and alternative therapies for Post-Traumatic Stress and Traumatic Brain Injury, such as "mask therapy" and use of medical marijuana instead of problematic narcotics that the VA tends to prescribe. We raised close to \$500 for our Peace Park project as we entertained and informed our audience. That same week, John Koehler attended a conference in Vietnam on Agent Orange and unexploded ordnance.

In April, we got involved in Global Art Project for Peace. Our Artist in Residence, Bob Fleming, created a tapestry-like banner showing the word "Peace" entwined with ivy that

was sent to Melbourne, Australia. Three other pieces of art painted by new member Charity Joy were sent to the International Peace Garden in Canada.

In May, Craig Wayh and I volunteered to staff a Vet's Journey Home retreat in Marathon, Wisconsin. This organization has been helping vets with PTS since 1989; it's worth looking into. It was a challenging and emotionally exhausting weekend, but worth the time and travel.

## CHAPTER 115 - RED WING, MN

**Emma Onawa**

Chapter 115 announces Peacestock 2016, at Hobgoblin Barn, Red Wing, Minnesota, Saturday, July 9, 9:00 am - dinner. The theme is "Terrorism: Definitions, Causes & Effects", featuring: Dr. Todd Green, Associate Prof. of European & Religious History at Luther College, Decorah, Iowa. Author of *The Fear of Islam: An introduction to Islamophobia in the West*. Dr. Green's address will be: Islamophobia: What Are We really Afraid of? He appears regularly on CNN, NPR, Al Jazeera, Rueters. Michael German, fellow with Brennan Center for Justice's Liberty and National Security Program and former special agent/whistle blower for the FBI and ACLU. Author of two books terrorism, Mr. German's address will be: The Failure of Our Counter-Intelligence Discourse. Music by Wild Colonial Bhoys.

Also:

- Awarded winning student and two honorable mentions for Kellogg-Briand essay contest "How Can We Become a More Peaceful People?", for \$500 and two \$100 scholarships;
- Assisting less than honorably discharged Vietnam vets to get VA benefits;
- Inviting peace speaker/activist Paul Chappell to address local youth;
- Power Point to public on World Beyond War

## CHAPTER 129 - PUEBLO, CO

**Regina Purcell**

The Howard Zinn Chapter 129 of Pueblo, Colorado, hosted a booth at the annual Eastside Cinco de Mayo parade in mid-May. The booth was seen by hundreds of people as volunteers informed them about Veterans For Peace and its mission. The parade ended in a newly revised park and included music, fancy cars, and political issues. Being an election year, Chapter 129 wants to encourage everyone to vote and has made its presence known.

On Memorial Day, the chapter hosted a ceremony at the local Vietnam Memorial. Dozens of people attended as speakers spoke about what the Cost of War means to them. As always VFP set up an information booth to recruit new members, and pass on literature to guests.



Ch 129 Memorial Day event

## CHAPTER 136 - CENTRAL FLORIDA

**Phil Restino**

It was the fiery "Responsibility and Duty" speech given by VFP's Mike Ferner in Washington, DC on 16 June 2005 that led to the creation of our Central Florida chapter of VFP in August 2005. See <http://tinyurl.com/duty-to-impeach>

Our members took to heart Mike's message and VFP's Statement of Purpose, and we all worked hard to try to bring an end to the U.S. wars of aggression still being carried out on our watch.

Sadly, some 11 years later we're now officially disbanding our chapter due to a continued loss of veteran members.

I'm proud of the efforts of our current and former members in representing VFP, and even more so of their commitment and consistent adherence to VFP's Statement of Purpose and the focus and principled standards VFP practiced as an organization. I understand and respect our members who left VFP in recent years due to the change in focus and double-standards in calls for accountability they felt was being demonstrated by VFP as a whole, and we hope this reason for our decline won't be lost on VFP.

We're thankful for the many VFP friendships made along the way and we wish you all the very best going forward.

## CHAPTER 157 - NC TRIANGLE

**John Heuer**

Chapter 157 is proud to be among the five VFP chapters participating in the Veterans Challenge Islamophobia initiative, and we welcome chapter member Logan Issac as project coordinator. We're also delighted to be one of the chapters taking part in VFP's latest music video, "Extremists for Peace," by Pat Scanlon.

Our chapter members have been busy! On May 16, three of us (Keith Cook, Dale Herman, and Vicki Ryder) were among 11 protestors arrested at the NC Legislature for staging a Moral Monday sit-in against House Bill 2. Another of our members, Howie Machtinger, has been spearheading the Full Disclosure Vietnam project, and our chapter serves as its fiduciary sponsor.

On May 21, Sam's Ride For Peace, led by 91-year old member Sam Winstead, arrived in DC after an 8-day ride from Raleigh, NC. The ride ended at the Swords to Plowshares Belltower, erected on the National Mall by member Roger Ehrlich. Together, Sam's Ride and the Belltower have reached thousands

with their message that Peace Is Possible. Also among the riders were chapter member Ahmed Selim, FILMS for World Peace Producer/Director, and several other members who also participated in DC events, including VFP Lobby Days and Breaking Through Power.



Sam's Ride arrives in D.C.

## CHAPTERS 161 - IOWA CITY, IA

### John Ivens

Our main activity during the last quarter was an Iowa speaking tour by Ann Wright and Kathy Kelly from May 1 to May 6. Along with VFP chapters 163, 169 and other peace groups in Iowa, we sponsored speaking events in Coralville, Dubuque, Cedar Rapids, the Quad Cities, Iowa City and Des Moines. The theme of the tour was "War and Refugees: Peace is Possible." Much of our discussion related to the over-coming of Islamophobia.

## CHAPTER 162 - EAST BAY, CA

### Cathe Norman

We continue to support the Crosses of Lafayette. Every month there is a maintenance work party. One of our members reads his poetry at the bi-annual vigils, on Memorial Day and Armistice Day. We attended Berkeley City Council Meetings to protest the militarism of the Berkeley police department and to protest the use of drones in Berkeley.

We collected clothing and toiletries to send to the homeless and deported vets in Tijuana, Mexico. Our collection was a total of 15 large bags. More items will be collected as need-

ed. We continue our work finding housing for homeless vets in the East Bay.

We demonstrated on behalf of the Richmond Progressive Alliance about the police shooting of Richard "Pedie" Perez. The unprovoked killing of Pedie has been a regular protest action for us. Some of our members attended the 10th Annual raising of the Peace Flag in Berkeley. Chapter 162 is working closely with Chapter 69 in planning our upcoming Annual VFP Convention in August. Hope to see many of you here for that; it will be amazing!

## CHAPTER 168 - LOUISVILLE, KY

### Carol Rawert-Trainer

Busy month! In March we were honored to host activist Roy Bourgeois for dinner before a local event he led. In April we phone-banked as part of the NPR Fundraiser and our chapter name was announced on 3 NPR stations periodically.

We received much media attention. On April 20 the Elizabethtown *News-Enterprise* published Jim Troy's letter "Consider Reasons Behind U.S. Action." On Earth Day the *Louisville Courier Journal* published Carol's letter about the environmental cost of war. On the following Sunday Amanda Hillard Beam, the new social justice writer for the *Courier Journal*, published a lengthy Op-Ed about 168 and national VFP.

On Memorial Day, also Military Appreciation Day, we tabled at the Louisville Bats (minor league baseball) game. Thousands of people attended and many stopped by to thank us for being there. And we welcome home members Steven Gardiner and Angie Reed Garner who are returning from Abu Dhabi.

We continue to hold the monthly 2nd Tuesday anti-war vigil at the corner of Bardstown Road and Douglass Loop from 4-5 PM. Coming up: June meet and greet, tabling at peace day and other community events and monthly vigils.

## CHAPTER 169—LINN COUNTY, IA

### Jan Watkins

Chapter 169 members worked with members of Chapter 161, Iowa City, and Chapter 163, Des Moines, in coordinating and sponsoring the appearances of Kathy Kelly and Ann Wright on a 6 city tour of Iowa. Both Kelly and Wright, Global Peace Activists, appeared on May 4th at Mount Mercy University in Cedar Rapids and spoke to a crowd of about 60 people. The event was very well received. On June 8th, Chapter 169 member, Robin Kash, was lead host for a showing of the film, *U.S.S. Liberty* at the C.S.P.S. Hall, New Bo District, in Cedar Rapids. This event was open to the public.

## CHAPTER 172 - PRESCOTT, AZ

### Dennis Duvall

On March 16th, the Tom Pettit Chapter was honored to host a presentation by Sister Megan Rice of Transform Now Plowshares! to an attentive audience at Prescott College. Sister Megan recently spent two years in prison for breaking into the Y-12 H-bomb factory in Oak Ridge, TN, where a new Uranium Processing Facility is planned to build 80 H-bomb secondaries per year, a violation of the 1970 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. It is a crime to continue to build nuclear weapons, insists Sister Megan; and, "when we know a crime exists, we have a duty to expose and oppose those crimes."

One of our desert-dwellers heads for the sea to join others exposing and opposing the crime of nuclear weapon proliferation. Tom Pettit Chapter member Ralph Hess has been invited to serve as a member of the Golden Rule crew during its sail along the Columbia River in mid-June. Ralph looks forward to participating in this adventure to join those dedicated to the Golden Rule Project's goal of reviving the Golden Rule's legacy of dramatically demonstrating opposition to nuclear weapons and war.

## CHAPTER 175 - JANESVILLE, WI

### Norm Aulabaugh

Chapter 175 was asked to provide an honor guard for Kathy Kelly on April 28, 2016 in Rockford, Illinois. Kathy delivered a program on her recent travels around the world to work on peace projects. Kathy Kelly is the founder of Voices for Creative Non-Violence and does tremendous good work to promote peace. Brad Geyer, Lars Prip and Norm Aulabaugh from Chapter 175 and Phil Fransen of Chapter 25 in Madison, WI provided the honor guard for Kathy. It was a great pleasure to support the work of this wonderful lady.

## CHAPTER 177- HUDSON VALLEY, NY

### Chris Antal

Our chapter received our charter in February and we are off to a strong start. Nick Mottern organized a weaponized drone whistleblower conference at University of Nevada Law School on March 30 and Chris Antal served as a panelist. On April 25 Nick and Chris attended the Honeywell shareholder meeting and confronted CEO David Cote about their profiting from weaponized drones and nuclear weapons, and on May 12 they presented on drones at the UN Church Center to the NGO Committee on Disarmament Peace and Security. Everett Cox, Nick and Chris marched with the VFP flag in the Daniel Berrigan Peace March through Manhattan on May 6. Our chapter co-sponsored a Service of Lamentation and Hope on Memorial Day Sunday at the historic Temple of Virtue in New Windsor, site of the last encampment of the Continental Army and the first Army chapel that deepened collective remembering of war costs beyond American casualties to include the deaths of innocents in other lands. Bryon Abrams, Chris, Everett, John Kinney, Mike Landrum, Twila Smith, and Greg Winner, Dottie Winner all participated. Everett, Mike Twila, Greg and Dottie proudly carried our

new VFP banner in the Washingtonville, NY Memorial Day Parade.

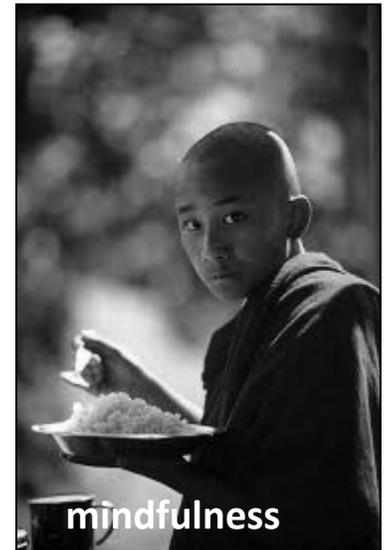
## CHAPTER 972 - No. COLORADO

### Paul Gessler

After 3 long years of perseverance, obstacles only PTSD could create, Northern Colorado Chapter of Veterans For Peace has been recognized. In October of 2015, Jack Manno, co-founding member, passed away. Jack was a lifelong jazz musician, singer and arranger. In January we memorialized Jack.

A week later we had a VFP presence in the annual Martin Luther King Day March in Fort Collins. Besides waging peace with pen and keyboard, our chapter focus has been Veterans Mental Health. Much of this focus has been on PTSD and the stigma surrounding it. Paul is on the Veterans Mental Health Council put together by the Cheyenne Wyoming VAMC, which has clinics in Fort Collins and Greeley Colorado.

On June 5th, we celebrated our first meeting as an official chapter with our first President Marty Bates, also a musician, whose skills as an organizer have brought us over the ridge into the Promised Land. VFP will have had its 2nd appearance in the July 4<sup>th</sup> parade in Fort Collins thanks to the efforts of long time peace advocate and VFP Member Ken Tharp. Thank you to all who helped make this possible.



*xuan loc, viet nam 1969*

at the orphanage  
beneath the rubber trees  
the monks cook rice  
for hungry children  
in huge flat pans,  
eighty kilos per meal,  
three times a day

softly, absent reproof  
or bitterness,  
they whisper  
that just as fragrant rice  
multiplies in volume  
as it cooks  
over the open flame

so, too, the orphanage  
swells in numbers  
of orphaned children  
ever since the americans  
came to help their friends  
and set the land  
so much to fire

John Buquoi

# "THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE."

Doug Rawlings

The poet Michael S. Harper once wrote that as an African-American artist he felt that his very being is often a kind of "battle field" where the struggle to be free and equal in a racist society is waged for all to witness. His metaphor made me think of those of us in VFP who could reach into a drawer and pull out a DD214, those of us who are confronted by well-meaning folk on Memorial Day and Veterans Day with a hearty "Thank you for your service." The matrix where our inner lives clash with the public's mythologized version of who we are is suddenly thrust upon us.

As we struggle to respond, we have entered, become, if you will, veritable "battlefields." What to do? Well, in the spirit of sometimes using our VFP newsletter as a manual, I welcomed the suggestion from Mike Ferner that we put together a list of "pithy reparates" from our membership to help us respond to the statement "Thank you for your service." Some responses are more acerbic than others, some take more than two breaths to express their speaker's sentiment, and some may not necessarily endear you to the "thankee," so you'll have to choose which variation you might want to employ. Enjoy! And thanks to all who chimed in....

\*\*\*\*\*

Please don't thank me for my 'service.' I was in the military, not the 'service.' Service is doing something good. Service is what the person does who fixes your car, if you have one. When the word 'service' is applied to the military, it helps to justify violence as a method of conflict resolution. The military solution to conflict is death and destruction. That's not 'service.' Call it what it is - the military. If you have to hurt someone to solve a problem, you are the problem. - *Jon Miles, Alice Ritter, and Amy Stieber.*

If I told you that during my service I attacked civilians in their homes at night... would you thank me for that? - *Ben Griffin*

When I was in the Marine Corps, I was there for selfish reasons. I'll accept your thanks for the work I do for peace today and yesterday and tomorrow. - *Jim Lovestar*

I usually respond to the service thanks with a thank you back but tell them I feel the work I have done since returning has been of greater value. Which then leads to further discussion. - *Barry Riesch*



I don't want any thanks because I did as little as I possibly could. What I want is for you to write to your congressperson/senator and tell them we need to get out of the Middle East and bring the troops home. - *Bill Warrick*

I committed war crimes. You're welcome. - *Bart Bolger*

If we're holding banners or flags at a demonstration, 'Do you mean for what we're doing here today? Thanks, we think we're serving our country better by working for peace. - *Bill Distler*

Of course most people who say 'thank you for your service' are trying to be respectful, no? So we don't necessarily want to come back with an angry zinger, Maybe something like: Thank you. I am now a Veteran For Peace. I know first-hand that war is not the way to serve humanity. - *Gerry Condon*

You know, my time in the military helped me understand the futility of war. The best way I can serve my country now is to be a member of Veterans For Peace. - *Gregory Grigsby*

Thank you but part of my service was assisting in the brutalization of the Vietnamese people and for that I am not proud," and "if anybody wants to thank me for my service, then please thank me for my service as a professional firefighter where I was trained to and did save lives, not take them." -- *Ken Dalton*

When I'm wearing my Vietnam Veterans Against the War shirt I usually say: 'We killed three to four million people or more who would have preferred to be our friends. The word service seems so inappropriate.' Sometimes I'll say: 'Against the war is the part I'd like to be thanked for.' - *Eduardo Cohen*

Thank you. I'm a member of Veterans For Peace. We try to fight harder for peace than we do war. I am lucky I am alive." - *Buzz Davis*

I thank them for saying that but then I follow up by saying that the best way they can 'thank me' is to work to end war, abolish war, so that in the future there won't be any veterans left who went to war to 'thank them' for serving." - *Will Thomas*

I didn't SERVE as a member of the US Navy; I serve humankind NOW as a member of Veterans For Peace.- *Erik Lobo*



(Continued from page 2)

tide of hate speech primarily directed at Muslims with our recently launched **Veterans Challenge Islamophobia** campaign. In November 2015, we filed an amicus letter brief in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in support of the Marshall Islands lawsuit against the United States for its failure to bargain in good faith to reduce and eliminate nuclear weapons under the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Finally, we bring to the peace movement our collective experience as veterans who have been involved in every war from World War II to the present. Our founders built our movement and organization on a commitment to nonviolence. Making that commitment to nonviolence requires we transform ourselves from soldiers, sailors, Marines, and airmen trained to wage war, into men and women committed to the path of nonviolent peacemakers.

To those who will join us, we pledge we will never give into war, violence and the injustice it brings to all living things.



The *Golden Rule* and her crew are also connecting with climate justice "kayaktavists" and communities who are resisting oil, coal and natural gas infrastructure, which present great environmental dangers, locally and globally.

"Yes, we are sailing for a nuclear-free world," says Helen Jaccard, VFP Golden Rule Project Manager. "But we are also sailing for a peaceful, sustainable future for all."

Many people and organizations are contributing to the voyage of the *Golden Rule*. *Physicians for Social Responsibility* is assisting with organizing in both Washington and Oregon. The *Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action* has donated \$1,000 for the Golden Rule's visit to the Puget Sound. Humboldt Bay Veterans For Peace recently donated over \$3,000 to purchase a 6-person inflatable lifeboat for the *Golden Rule*. Education Without Borders donated \$500 toward the Portland visit. Veterans For Peace chapters in Portland and Seattle have made substantial contributions, as have VFP chapters as far away as San Diego and Ohio, who are challenging other VFP chapters to become *Golden Rule* sustainers.

Follow the *Golden Rule* this summer on the website at [vfpgoldenruleproject.org](http://vfpgoldenruleproject.org), or on Facebook "VFP Golden Rule Project."

Track the *Golden Rule*'s progress as she sails at [share.delorme.com/GoldenRule](http://share.delorme.com/GoldenRule)



"The war system has put a lot of effort into convincing us to live in fear, while at the same time distancing civilians from war. The veteran voice is vital in exposing the true costs of war and militarism."

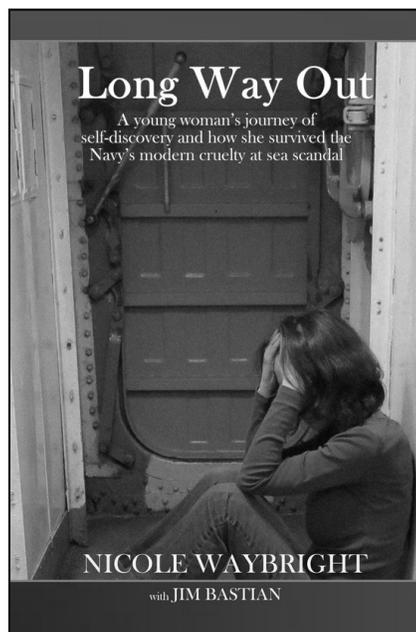
PEACE IS POSSIBLE.



DONATE NOW

# LONG WAY OUT

Nicole Waybright



I joined Veterans For Peace three years ago, midway through writing my newly published book, *Long Way Out – A young woman's journey of self-discovery and how she survived the Navy's modern cruelty at sea scandal*.

My VFP journey has a distinct beginning. One quiet night, as I sat alone writing in my office, I began to shape a chapter focusing on my experience of the phenomenon of the ultra-nationalistic language that has emerged since the First Gulf War. This unique language, made up of catch phrases, slogans, and war rallying cries, has had the effect of stifling honest conversation and critical thinking regarding our recent wars. For years, I had been frustrated by the stereotyping of military veterans – that we were all nationalistic in our thinking and staunch supporters of a conserva-

tive foreign policy and military agenda. I thought: there must be like-minded veterans out there who share my feelings and have organized, focusing on topics related to our ongoing wars, as well as discussing peace initiatives. Wondering if I was in fact alone or not, I started googling "veterans peace," "veterans against the Iraq war," etc. That night, I found the website for VFP; I read it over and joined online! I have since become a member of Chapter 9, Boston!

*Long Way Out* explores the psychological crisis I underwent while in the military, telling the true story of my coming-of-age struggles during my deployment as an officer on a U.S. Navy destroyer. It is a Jungian-based journey about a woman in crisis, a situation that is relatable to anyone who has faced threatening crossroads and times of personal doubt, in or out of the military. In my personal case, the catalyst for my journey through the individuation process (a psychological process that was first named and defined by psychiatrist Carl Jung in the early twentieth century) was the experience that began once deployed to my first ship, wherein I discovered quickly that I was unsuited and philosophically opposed to Navy life. Facing a five year obligation and serving alongside a tyrannical executive officer only added to the psychological torment and sense of personal crisis. Alongside my turbulent psychological journey, *Long Way Out* offers a glimpse into the tragic story of the notorious executive officer under whom I served –

the first woman in U.S. history to command an Aegis destroyer and be stripped of command for "cruelty and maltreatment" of her crew. TIME magazine later called this commander "the Female Captain Bligh."

The story is recounted in graphic and historically accurate detail based on my five years of service as a commissioned officer in the Surface Warfare (SWO) Navy. I served as a naval officer onboard a guided missile destroyer and an amphibious assault ship from 1996-2001. In these assignments, I was in the first wave of women to be stationed aboard combatant ships after congress lifted the ban on women serving aboard warships following the Tailhook scandal in the 1990s.

In the unlikely ending, I emerge with a radicalized self-understanding, committed to seeking self-awareness and exploring my newfound interest in building a culture of peace.

*Long Way Out* is available on [ecrater.com](http://ecrater.com) (print) and Amazon (print and ebook Kindle).

*NICOLE WAYBRIGHT is a full-time writer and resides in New England. Nicole received her BS in Mechanical Engineering from Boston University in 1996. She was honorably discharged from the Navy in 2001. In 2006 she received her MA in Spanish Literature from the University of Rhode Island. She serves on the National Board of Directors of Veterans For Peace as well as on the Executive Committee of the Boston Chapter.*



## EREBUS

You have the dream again: monsoon season, jungle,  
a muddy village road; you are naked,  
stumbling along a paddy dike across an open field  
toward the village where C. W. killed all the pigs  
but once into the trees  
there is only thickening jungle,  
canopy hung with smoldering flares.

You stumble into an open field,  
cupping your balls,  
and from the next treeline  
you hear music, Motown, Aretha  
who used to throb from the mortar pits  
where the brothers slung round after round down the tubes,  
*a little respect*,  
and when you enter the village, ashamed,  
you see men you tagged dead  
and choppered out like sides of beef,  
grinning at you from around a fire,  
and the old women, the children  
who didn't move quick enough, all the Cong,  
they are there too,  
and the ones from the day so many died  
you tore up your own clothes for bandages,  
all there and singing, lit amber by the fire.

*What took you so long, Doc*, they say.  
They ask you where you've been and you can't tell them.  
Over twenty years since you got lost coming home,  
and now you're back here in the stinking silt and hedgerows,  
shin deep in pigs, but this time  
naked and without a weapon.



And so you sit down with the dead.  
Reese with the white eyebrows  
wraps a poncho around your shoulders,  
tells you what it was like when he was dying,  
treeline crackling with machinegun fire  
you pounding on his chest to start his heart  
and him thinking, *Easy, it's so quiet where I am,*  
*quiet and fine*, and Ballard,  
blue black and thick-shouldered, telling you  
he watched you working on his body from above,  
how you were white and sweat-soaked,  
your chest heaving, trying to find the exit wound  
and keep from being hit  
and how he wanted to tell you it was all right,  
it was fine, and Price, arms so long  
he could fold a sheet by himself,  
whom you crawled down into the stream bed  
to drag out by the heels, who lived to go home,  
to be killed in a dope deal two years later.

*All of us are here*, he says, *sit down,*  
*we'll get you some clothes,*  
*you're home now, easy,*  
*remember what you used to say?*  
*You're going to be fine, my man,*  
*you're going home,*  
*just don't fade out on me,*  
*hey, what's your mother's maiden name?*

----- from Doug Anderson's  
*THE MOON REFLECTED FIRE*  
(Alice James Books, 1994).

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